

# UFO COMMENTARY

A journal of  
progressive ufology

Vol.1; no.4

Winter 1970



**UFOCAT-70:**

**A Computer Project by**

**Dr. David R. Saunders**

UFO COMMENTARY  
(formerly the UFO Analysis & Research Bulletin)

Vol. 1 No. 4

Winter, 1970

UFO COMMENTARY is published quarterly by Patrick A. Huyghe at 72 Jefferys Drive, Newport News, Virginia 23601. UFO COMMENTARY is available through exchange with other publications or by subscription. Single copy price: 60¢. Subscription: \$2.00 per year or \$4.00 for two years. Make all remittances payable to Patrick A. Huyghe. UFO COMMENTARY is non-profit.

All submissions are welcome but must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope and postage if requested to be returned. We reserve the right to publish in whole or in part any and all letters sent to us unless otherwise indicated. Advertising rates may be obtained by writing to the editor. Opinions expressed in UFO COMMENTARY are those of the authors involved and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor. Permission from the editor of UFO COMMENTARY is necessary for reprinting material herein. All rights reserved.

UFO COMMENTARY is Copyright © 1970 by Patrick A. Huyghe.

EDITOR: Patrick A. Huyghe  
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Allen Benz  
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR: Paul Braczyk

CONSULTANTS: Larry W. Bryant  
Joseph M. Erhardt  
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Richard E. Walton

CONTENTS:

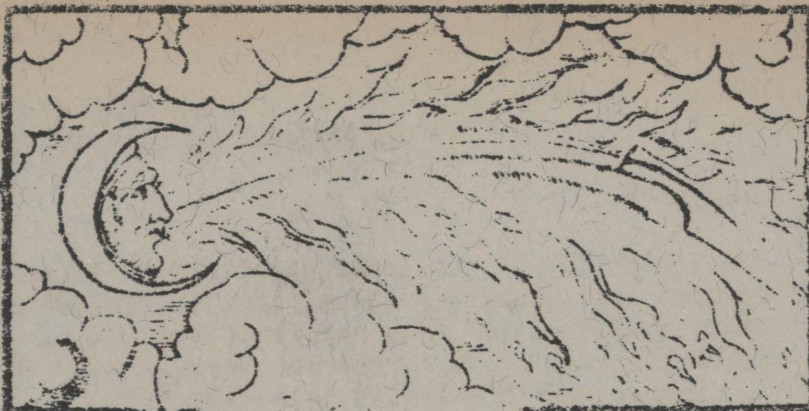
Editorial: Tiptoe through the UFOlogists	4
UFCCAT-70: UFO Activity in Relation to Day-of-the-Week, Dr. David R. Saunders	5
UFO News Reports	9
Book Review	12
Speculation, by William E. Moser	13
The Mysterious Cohoke Light, by Jay Mundy	15

EDITORIAL NOTES:

- + The Special Research Issue has been delayed until the next issue (see page 14) so that it will coincide with our first anniversary edition. Since this publication will be a drain on our finances, the last page of the issue will be reserved for Contributing Supporters: those who donate \$1 or more will have their name and address listed on this page. No exchange advertisements will be accepted for this issue; they must be paid advertisements.
- + The Fall issue of UFO COMMENTARY incorporated the Aerial Phenomena Investigations and Research Center's publication UFO PHENOMENON.
- + Our long promised Special Satire issue will be delayed for another year. If you are in dying need of a refreshing pause, if you enjoy a little (or big) laugh at UFOs, and if you don't mind being cut down, why don't you get a copy of BIOVERSE (Glenn B. Ricker, 1334 Wesley Ave., Berwyn, Illinois 60402) for only 25¢. This should keep you boiling until our special satire issue comes out.
- + We wish to point out to our readers the new staff arrangement and welcome Paul Braczyk and Richard Walton as Book Review Editor and Advertising Manager, respectively.
- + We wish to thank our readers for their support over the past year and wish you all a very happy New Year.

COVER DESIGN BY John A. Rimmer.

## EDITORIAL



### TIPTOE THROUGH THE UFOLOGISTS . . . .

A few comments on UFOlogists might be appropriate at this time as my travels this past summer have given me the opportunity to acquaint myself with the nature of the individuals in both the United States and France. I will not attempt to compare them as the two are too similar to compare, but observations can easily be made about the personality of the UFOlogist in general. I base my comments from my attendance at the 1970 Congress of Scientific UFOlogists and from personally meeting with the leaders of several French and American organizations.

Immediately noticeable was the wide spectrum of the types of people, represented by the wide variety of ages (15-70), who were involved in UFO research. From the viewpoint of continuity this bodes a stable future for the field as youth provides the fresh blood. An even brighter future is seen when it is realized that more than a quarter of all the current UFOzines are published by people under twenty years of age.

The speeches and conversations which were heard, the attention they received and the conduct which they generated, reflected a main factor in individual UFO research. It seemed as if each individual was specialized in a certain aspect of UFO research whether it be an interest in the United Nations recognition of UFOs, skywatching, government censorship, computers, or other buffs themselves. Discussions, or rather disagreements rarely arose except on financial or business matters. This type of specialization is favorable only if the individual remains informed with other events and developments within the field. Unfortunately, this was the exception rather than the rule.

In France, as in the United States, there exists intense criticism of others' works, actions, and specializations. This, in a sense, is valuable in that it keeps everyone on their toes about what they are saying, doing, and specializing in.

This criticism is most probably linked to one of the basic drives of UFOlogy: individualism. The UFOlogist is not one who follows the multitude and will not hesitate to assert his opinion however variant it might be, if questioned on the subject. He will boast his contribution or participation in the field. Either it is a form of escape from reality, in which case his interest is probably fleeting, cursory, connective and/or short. Or, it may be that reality doesn't present enough of a challenge for the individual and the individual is looking for something beyond it.

(continued on page 8)

UFOCAT-70 is a file containing 15,278 entries; each entry is based on the details of a UFO sighting report as given by some particular source and has been partially coded and punched for computer analysis. UFOCAT-70 is not a completed project. The following is one of the studies which have been made on the basis of  
UFOCAT-70

-----

## UFO ACTIVITY IN RELATION TO DAY-OF-THE-WEEK

by Dr. David R. Saunders

An opinion that was popular among that now extinct species, "Base UFO Officer," held that the peak of UFO activity fell on weekends. According to its adherents, this was consistent with the fact that Saturday night is most popular for partying and drinking, and with the theory that UFOs are caused by hoaxes and hallucinations.

Quite a different suggestion is made by Keel (2, p. 20), who finds "that the greatest number of sightings are reported on Wednesday, and then they slowly taper off through the rest of the week. The lowest number occurs on Tuesday." This conclusion is based on a sample of 730 Type I sightings reported in the press in 1966. Keel calls this "Wednesday phenomenon" "very valid" and "inexplicable," and makes it a cornerstone for building his ultraterrestrial thesis.

My own informal observation had been that the peak of the most notorious flaps fell on or near Tuesday. However, the timing of official debunking statements and their effect on the press is a possible contributing factor in at least some of these instances.

A common feature of all of the above views is that they predict unequal proportions of reports on various days of the week. Before considering any of them seriously, we would need to establish that the simpler hypothesis of predicted equality is too simple. A hypothesis of predicted equality would make sense, for example, if UFOs are primarily a natural phenomenon unrelated to the human calendar.

Neither of the two largest-scale published statistical studies of UFOs (1,5) pays any attention to day of the week.

In order to shed light on this matter, UFOCAT-70 was sorted into chronological order, according to the dates punched in columns 9-15. (Typically, these are the dates according to local time.) For each date, the reports were grouped according to the political unit and subunit punched in columns 41-44. Reports with incomplete dates, erroneous dates, not-later-than dates, or dates before 1921, were all excluded.

The computer was then instructed to tally the remaining reports into a table, according to year and day of the week. In order to minimize any bias that could be caused by multiple UFOCAT entries for the same sighting, the computer was instructed to tally a maximum of one event per political unit per date. This reduced the total number of tallies to 7025, distributed as shown in Table 1.

. . . continued

TABLE 1

	TOTAL	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	X**2	R
1921	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1922	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	5.000	-0.26
1923	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1924	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	5.000	-0.26
1925	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1926	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6.000	0.43
1927	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6.000	0.43
1928	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1929	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	5.000	-0.26
1930	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1931	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6.000	0.43
1932	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1933	4	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	6.500	0.75
1934	5	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	4.800	-0.41
1935	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1936	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	8.667	2.01
1937	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	5.000	-0.26
1938	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1939	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1940	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1941	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
1942	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	8.667	2.01
1943	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	4.000	-1.07
1944	8	1	1	0	2	2	2	0	4.250	-0.85
1945	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	6.000	0.43
1946	7	1	2	0	2	1	0	1	4.000	-1.07
1947	467	72	76	79	62	57	55	66	7.786	1.51
1948	71	15	9	7	10	11	14	5	7.577	1.39
1949	43	6	3	10	7	6	6	5	4.372	-0.75
1950	317	40	53	44	57	51	40	32	10.233	2.86
1951	84	7	12	14	15	11	16	9	5.333	-0.02
1952	407	65	52	75	62	50	45	58	10.713	3.11
1953	154	19	17	21	24	22	26	25	2.909	-2.18
1954	486	67	72	59	75	65	78	70	3.539	-1.50
1955	171	29	28	18	28	27	21	20	5.146	-0.16
1956	225	34	32	34	32	36	30	27	1.644	-4.21
1957	447	51	65	88	68	66	58	51	15.204	5.48
1958	254	45	40	33	32	35	36	33	3.622	-1.41
1959	176	24	21	40	34	18	24	15	18.807	7.41
1960	125	19	19	20	17	16	15	19	1.168	-5.48
1961	80	12	14	12	9	10	10	13	1.725	-4.03
1962	122	16	17	23	18	12	20	16	4.115	-0.97
1963	86	5	13	18	14	16	11	9	9.395	2.40
1964	60	7	10	14	5	8	7	9	5.800	0.30
1965	193	26	36	21	25	32	27	26	5.285	-0.06
1966	373	58	53	47	61	45	61	48	5.206	-0.11
1967	1561	199	238	239	240	236	212	197	10.368	2.93
1968	813	109	120	112	134	106	116	116	4.347	-0.77
1969	264	40	30	34	40	61	31	28	20.295	8.21
1970	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.	-0.
TOTAL	7025	971	1033	1067	1077	1008	966	903	22.806	9.57

... continued

Under the simple-minded assumption that all seven days of the week are equally likely, the chi-square statistic was computed for each line of the table and these values were scaled according to their remarkability. An R of zero indicates the expected degree of conformity between the data and the equally likely hypothesis; a negative R indicates even better than chance conformity. A high positive R indicates that the inequalities are so great that an explanation other than "equally likely" must be sought. Since it turns out that the only alternative explanation worth considering are based on essentially the same data that have been tallied, an R of approximately +10 will be needed (3). For this discussion, I will regard 9.57 as meeting this requirement.<sup>1</sup>

The R-value obtained from the total line is greater than for any of the individual years. The largest value for a single year is 8.21 for 1969; since data for only part of 1969 appear in UFOCAT-70, the data on this line are particularly vulnerable to the influence of one or two "flap dates," which could act to raise chi-square and R. The second largest value for a single year is 7.41 for 1959; the form of the 1959 distribution is similar to that of the overall totals. From 1947 on, the algebraic sum of all the single-year remarkability values is 13.95, which is not enough greater than 9.57 to require further comment. In view of these things, Table 1 may be interpreted as indicating that there is a tendency for days of the week to contribute unequal numbers of UFO reports, and that this tendency is parallel from year to year.

The mere existence of this unequal tendency tends to weaken the "natural phenomenon" hypothesis (but see below). The nature of the inequalities argues strongly against the USAF view (Saturday should rank first instead of last) and against the Keel view (Tuesday should rank last instead of almost first). It should be noted, though that Keel's view is based on analysis of Type I (low level) sightings only, whereas this study has employed no such screen.

Actually, the most striking feature of Table 1 is the low number of tallies for Saturday, with the next lowest totals recorded for Friday and Sunday. It is possible that these results depend on the action of an editorial filter, rather than on the phenomenon itself. Many papers either don't publish at all on Sunday, or compose all but the front page ahead of time; assuming most papers want to print "news," a sighting that takes place on Saturday would have relatively fewer ways of becoming known.

It is also possible that these results do depend directly on the phenomenon. In this connection, Smith's analysis of possible correlations of UFO activity with unexplained power failures acquires added interest. Smith has already displayed the similarity of the power-failure and UFO activity curves on a year-by-year basis (4). He also presents the following frequencies for power failures by day

. . . continued

---

<sup>1</sup> When a parallel run was made allowing one event per political sub-unit per date, a total of 8741 tallies resulted, with chi-square = 27.708 and R = 12.26; the inclusion of these tallies appears to reinforce what is shown in Table 1, but the data are now dominated by a few well-investigated flaps. When a run was made removing the restriction entirely, 12,558 tallies resulted, with chi-square = 23.075 and R = 9.72; the addition of these further tallies evidently does tend to blur the picture.

of the week:

Sunday	48
Monday	64
Tuesday	56
Wednesday	72
Thursday	76
Friday	63
Saturday	30
Total	<u>409</u>

Under an "equally likely" hypothesis, this distribution yields a chi-square of 25.05, and a remarkability of 10.80; therefore, we can't just ignore it. Of course, it might be sufficient to observe that overall power consumption is less on weekends, and that power failures are likely to be related to load. In Smith's data, obtained from the Federal Power Commission, the definition of a reportable power failure is related to load.

On the other hand, the form of Smith's distribution is basically similar to that of our totals in Table 1; both display the relatively sharp low point on Saturday and the relatively rounded high earlier in the week. The power failure curve seems more exaggerated than the UFO activity curve, but this could be expected if the UFO dates are relatively less accurately known. Thus, it is conceivable that both curves depend on a "level of UFO-interest in terrestrial goings-on" as a function of the day of the week. This need not be incompatible with a relationship between power failures and power consumption.

#### References

- 1) Davidson, Leon. An Analysis of the Air Force Project Blue Book Special Report Number 14. Davidson, 1957.
- 2) Keel, John A. Operation Trojan Horse. Putnam, 1970.
- 3) Saunders, D. R. On the statistical treatment of remarkable data. Educational and Psychological Measurement 30, 533-545, Autumn 1970.
- 4) Smith, Paul J. Power Failures versus Unidentified Flying Objects. APRO Bulletin, March-April 1970.
- 5) Vallee, Jacques. Analysis of 8,260 UFO Sightings. Flying Saucer Review 14, (3) 9-11, May-June 1968.

---

(Editorial continued from page 4)

Although there exist much talk about the possibility of one worldwide UFO organization comprised of the merger of the hundreds of smaller groups, this factor of individuality prohibits this ideal from materializing. This independence the UFO researcher must have is evident in the constant feuds and other instances of non-cooperation existent among some organizations.

It must be realized that nearly any individual who has an interest in the subject can succeed in making a contribution of one form or another. This feeling of success reinforces the ego and strengthens individuality. Thus this individuality is not only UFOlogy's driving force, but also probably its downfall. Hopefully, it will only be temporary, realistically, it's hopeless.

-- Patrick Huyghe



////////////////////////////////////

"I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." -- Sir Isaac Newton

**AIR ACADEMY TELLS CADETS NOT TO DISCOUNT UFOs**

Cadets at the Air Force Academy training ground for the nation's future aviation leaders, are being advised to keep an open mind on the subject of unidentified flying objects.

The suggestion is in a 500-page notebook that is restricted to "academy use only." The section of UFOs is a 14-page chapter written by Major Donald G. Carpenter.

Academy officials denied that the Air Force had been hiding the textbook from the public. They said that the book was in short supply because only 200 copies have been printed.

The chapter on UFOs says that such objects have been reported for almost 50 thousand years and that "the entire phenomenon could be psychological but this is quite doubtful" because of some of the reliable witnesses who have spotted them.

"It could also be due to known and unknown phenomena...but this is also questionable," the book says.

"This leaves us with the unpleasant possibility of alien visitors or at least alien-controlled UFOs. However, the data are not well correlated and suggests at least three and maybe four groups of aliens, possibly at different stages of development.

"This, too, is difficult to accept: It implies the existence of intelligent life on a majority of planets in our solar system or a surprisingly strong interest in earth by members of other solar systems."

The textbook says, "The best thing to do is to keep an open and skeptical mind and not take an extreme position."

(Source: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Sun., Oct. 11, 1970.)

**NEW YORK UFOs TRACED TO VENUS**

A number of New Yorkers and boxer Muhammed Ali reported seeing unidentified flying objects at dawn today - but astronomers said the sightings probably were of Venus.

... continued



"Venus is extremely brilliant at this time," said Dr. Franklin Branley, chairman of the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History. "And invariably, when people see it, they think they see it move, jump around and carry on in all sorts of erratic behavior. It's probably due to atmospheric distortion."

Police headquarters said a patrolman in a squad car and an anonymous telephone caller reported seeing UFOs over Queens County. The call was followed up but nothing found on the ground or hovering above it at the specified location.

Ali and UPI sports writer William Verigan sighted a bright larger-than-star-size light as Ali was doing his early-morning road work in Central Park. Later Ali, Verigan and trainers Angelo Dundee and Drew (Bundini) Brown watched another point of light streaking due north until it was obscured by trees. (Source: The Washington Post, Wen., Dec. 2, 1970.)

---

#### MYSTERIOUS GREEN FLASH OVER HONOLULU

A mysterious green flash in the sky touched off an alert that involved the Coast Guard, airline pilots and even space officials Sunday, but it was later determined the commotion was probably caused by a meteor.

At 1:33 a.m. the Coast Guard began receiving reports from Hawaii residents of a "brilliant green flash" southwest of Honolulu.

"It looked like a possible aviation disaster," the Coast Guard said. "Our rescue ships and aircraft were immediately alerted and other government agencies were notified."

Airline pilots started sending in reports fixing the position of the flash about 100 miles (161 km) offshore.

It was quickly determined that no planes were missing in the area. National Aeronautics and Space Administration officials said the flash couldn't have been caused by the re-entry of any American space hardware.

(Source: Mainichi Daily News, Tues., Aug. 18, 1970. Credit: Y. J. Matsumura.)

---

#### SAUCER SCARE ROCKS PENANG

The gates of an English school near here were locked Friday to keep out hundreds of people curious to meet six pupils who claimed they saw a flying saucer land packed with spacemen three inches (seven cm) high.

The pupils' story made frontpage headlines in the English language press here Friday and detectives went to Stowell School at Bukit Mentajam to question them.

Two of the boys - T. Veerasingham, 10, and A. Devaraj, 12, told reporters they were prepared to swear in a temple their story was true.

One boy claimed he saw five spacemen - one in a yellow uniform with horns on his head, and the others in blue uniforms.

"When I tried to catch them, the one in the yellow suit, apparently their leader, shot my right leg. See, you can see the mark," he said pointing to a red spot.

FOOTNOTE: A television serial, "The Land of the Giants." has recently been screened here in which earthmen landing on another planet are about three inches (seven cm) high in relation to the native giants.

(Source: Asahi Evening News, Sat., August 22, 1970. Credit: Y. J. Matsumura.)

---

#### UFO SIGHTING LOCATIONS FOR AUG.-OCT. 1970

UFO activity in this three month span has been worldwide and medium as far as the number of reports are concerned. The following is the breakdown for each month: 1)AUG.- Illinois, Kansas, Texas, Mississippi, Arizona, California, Oregon, England, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, France, Italy, and Japan; 2)SEPT.- Arkansas,

. . . continued

Missouri, Illinois, Washington, Russia, Sweden, England, Rhodesia, South Africa, Brazil, and Australia; and 3) OCT.- Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Utah, Colorado, Washington, Canada, England, and Australia. By far the most remarkable series of sightings for this period is the Australian flap.

#### UFO FLAP OVER AUSTRALIA

The start of the Australian flap can be traced back to sightings during the end of June over Wilcannia, N.S.W. Objects were sighted by constables and other residents and films were taken. Sightings over Bellinger on the 7th of July are believed to have been caused by a meteor. On the 28th of July UFOs were reported over Chiltern by two youths. This however, may have been a "false start" as no sightings were reported during August. The concentration hit in September.

On the first of September sightings were reported by two people over Barmadman. The next day, three people from Berrigan reported seeing a strange object in the sky. On the 8th sightings broke out in several different places in the Southern Riverina, including Leeton and Millicent. The following night objects were seen over Yanco, Narrandera, and Berrigan. Lights had also been seen over Deniliquin, Leniston, Finley, and South Coree during the week. The Berrigan News of Sept. 8, said: "The reports have all been the same - a bright glowing object gradually changing from a yellow to a flaming red colour. It remained stationary for long periods and then moved quickly to another spot."

Strange lights were seen over Murrumburrah and Junee on the 11th of Sept. while a couple of families watched a mysterious object over Leeton on the same night. On the 18th, a UFO was reported by a Hanwood family. The mystery light seen over Renmark on the 20th was later discovered to be a flare. On the 25th, the above mentioned family in Hanwood saw the same object they had seen before at approximately the same time of day. The object which exploded in front of six people over Gladstone may have been a satellite which had fallen into the earth's atmosphere.

On the 8th of October, an object with two large red lights was reported for the third consecutive night over Ballarat, Victoria. Another UFO was seen over Leeton on the 9th. Objects were sighted over Stanbridge on the 14th and 15th. Also on the 15th, another UFO was reported over Canberra. Four people saw a UFO at Warnbro Beach, while three railwaymen reported a strangelight over Junee, all on the night of the 21st. Another UFO was seen over Broula on the 25th.

The most recent and most remarkable sighting was reported in the Washington Post of December 9th:

"Mineworkers at this desert town [Meekatharra] in the heart of Australia's mineral prospecting areas claimed today [Dec. 8] that a flying saucer had been watching them at work. They said an orange-and-white object hovered and hissed for two hours yesterday in the sky east of the town, 500 miles northeast of Perth."

-- Compiled by Patrick Huyghe. References: UFO Research Committee Newspaper Clipping Service, 3521 S. W. 104th, Seattle, Washington 98146.

#### A TINY PLANET CALLED "BETULA"?

Does anyone have any information on the following item which appeared in a school newspaper 6 or 7 years ago?

"A tiny planet is coming closer and closer to Earth. This spring it will be only about 14 and a half million miles away. Now, that may seem very far away to you. But to astronomers it is very close. It is about the closest any planet has ever come to Earth. The baby planet is called Betula. It was discovered about 10 years ago. Scientists are looking forward to watching it. It may help them make more exact measurements of the distance between the Sun and the Earth. Only special telescopes will be able to pick up Betula because it is so small. The diameter, or distance through the center, is only about 50 miles.



## BOOK REVIEWS

---

CHARLES FORT: PROPHET OF THE UNEXPLAINED

Damon Knight

Doubleday & Co., N.Y. 1970

Okay, all you forteans out there in Establishmentland, here's your chance to learn "where it's at" from the one who made this all possible -- Charles Fort himself. Even though this volume did not live up to my personal expectations of what a biography of Our Leader should be like, it nevertheless is better than nothing at all and I must recommend it to the hilt.

The biggest beef I have with the book is that one gets the uncanny feeling of De ja Vu throughout its two-hundred-some-odd pages. I think that this is partially due to the fact that most of the "basics" are re-presented, e.g. sky falls, but mostly due to Knight's over-generous use of direct quotations. Even when a great many of these come from rare Fort writings (and a large percentage do) the singularity of his individualistic personality does not quite make it across; Charles Fort remains perched like a stuffed mallard in the taxidermist's window.

It becomes obvious too, in a relatively short time, that there just isn't that much material on Fort in the book (probably because there isn't that much in existence). Knight tries to balance this shortcoming by resorting to fillers, but with only limited success. Right in the middle of Fort's life, we are hit by a barrage of speculation and semi-related facts so as to disrupt the continuity to an embarrassing degree. Interesting as Knight's statistical analyses are (so too with his speculative conclusions) I feel that they really do not belong in a biography. The same holds true with the excruciatingly long section on Velikovsky.

Despite the drawbacks pointed out, Knight has put together an excellent eulogy to Fort. The initial few chapters dwell on Fort's unfortunate childhood, which to a psychologist, could probably help to explain why a man becomes a library hermit throughout most of his adult life. Perhaps the most fascinating biographical chapter is entitled "X AND Y (1910 - 1918)". In it we learn of Fort's two unpublished manuscripts: "X was organized around the notion that our civilization is invisibly controlled by beings on the planet Mars (anticipating Fort's famous line, 'I think we're property'). In Y, Fort imagined another sinister civilization, a little closer at hand - at the South Pole." After reading this chapter, one gets a great feeling of frustration, knowing that you will probably never get to read these fortean masterpieces. From the relatively brief sections dealing with Fort's adult years, the book concludes with events A.F. (After Fort). These events include the formation of the old Fortean Society, publication of DOUBT, etc. The photo section is exceptional; especially his classic pose where Fort is shown with his "super checkerboard."

Since you are reading this review at all, you must be a fortean at heart. With this in mind, it would almost be treason for you NOT to buy this book. As I remarked at the outset, I recommend it to the hilt!

-- Paul Braczyk

# SPECULATIONS

by William E. Moser

Some modern sightings of UFOs suggest that they may be carrying out a survey and the following is certainly similar to steps that our own astronauts, going to other planets which could possibly support some life, would possibly carry out in planning their mission. Surprisingly these steps coincide with the behaviour of many reported UFOs, so it has been suggested that "flying saucers" may be carrying out a reconnaissance of Earth.

(I) Various probes would be sent out to ascertain conditions on the planet to be examined and find traces of existing life. If the planet had some natural satellites or moons that would also be a matter of investigation. Photographs would be taken as well as soil or air samples, etc.

(II) If any sort of advanced society would be found on the planet further probes would be sent to discover types of vehicles used for transport on this planet, hence many UFOs are reported over railway lines and roadways. Any shipping would naturally be regarded with interest.

(III) If the occupants of the planet would prove to be hostile then it would be certainly necessary to investigate the types of weapons available, systems of lighting and power sources including atomic power, if evolved, water reservoirs and any type of military installations. It is worth noting that in 1964 a photograph showing UFOs carrying out these surveys was taken in England by a Mr. J. Templeton of his five year old daughter. When developed "a strange white space-man" could be seen standing behind the girl, looking into the direction of the Chapel Cross Atomic Power Station and a NATO Radio Tracking Base.

(IV) In the first manned expeditions to an alien planet, collection of mineral, vegetable, and animal samples, most probably from practically uninhabited areas would be a must. This we often hear in respect to UFO reports seen in desertlike or outback areas.

(V) If the occupants of the planet proved to be friendly then the astronauts from other worlds would certainly land nearer to more populated areas and possibly try to communicate with the occupants. Before that they would show their vehicles from close by to as many persons as possible. Then the decision that the visitors from outer space could land safely would be taken into consideration and landings effected, thus bringing no peril of any kind to either civilisation.

(VI) If on the other hand there might be some doubt in a higher civilisation than our own, that any type of closer contact could be some danger for health reasons, living conditions or any other vital matter, final steps of contact may never eventuate, thus the UFOs remaining an enigma for the population of Earth till all risks contact might bring are finally overcome.

((Mr. Moser is the Honorary Secretary of Australia's largest UFO organization,))  
((UFOIC, 19 Hurlstone Avenue, Hurlstone Park, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, 2193.))

The NEXT ISSUE of UFO COMMENTARY will be our

FIRST ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL RESEARCH ISSUE

It will include:

An Introduction to UFOCAT-70 Approach	by Dr. David R. Saunders
Uncle Sam's UFO Literature	by John A. Keel
Some Notes on the "Airships"	by Larry W. Bryant
Public Libraries and UFOs	by Lucius Farish
Lost or Misplaced	by Allen Benz
Book Review of Harmonic 33	by Richard Walton
	by Paul Braczyk

Plus an Index to Volume 1 of UFO COMMENTARY!  
and other articles by: Farish, Benz, Butcher, Erhardt, Bryant, and much more!

Subscribers and exchanges receive it as part of their subscription. Other wise it will sell for only \$1.50 per copy. Distributors may write to the editor for discount prices. The issue will appear after March 1971.

Order from: Patrick A. Huyghe, 72 Jefferys Drive, Newport News, Va. 23601.

SAUCER NEWS

Gray Barker's UFO zine. Professionally printed, many photos and illustrations. Sample copy \$1.00, Four issue subscription, \$4.00. Published irregularly. Write to SAUCER NEWS, Box 2228, Clarksburg, W. Va. 26301.

OUTERMOST

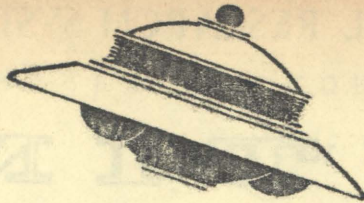
A new approach to UFOs. New theories and experiences by some of the most respected people in ufology. Persons such as Armand Laprade, Richard Shaver, Otto Binder, Kenneth Larson, John Dean, Joan Howard, Rey d'Aquila, Hans Lauritzen and others. Plus a chapter from SILVER BRIDGE, a worldwide directory of UFO clubs and publications with addresses, a listing of UFO articles run in national magazines in 1969, and artwork by the editor of SS&S. If you haven't got a copy of OUTERMOST yet, you can still do so. It's only \$1.50 per copy. Write today to: Gene Duplantier, 17 Shetland St. Willowdale, Ontario, Canada.

UFO CHRONOLOG

This is the only publication which contains detailed and comprehensive sighting chronologies in order to inform its readers of the total UFO activity over a given time period. Moreover, it includes analytical articles on the nature and activities of UFOs and related subjects, and discusses the essences of the UFOlogy movement itself. Get a big 32 page issue every four months, \$2.50 for a three issue subscription. Write Joseph M. Erhardt, 43 Richland Drive, Newport News, Va. 23602, U.S.A.

QUEST-UFO REPORT

Published bi-monthly. 50 cents per copy or \$3.00 per year (six issues). Articles deal with UFOs and the supernatural. Also covered are many news stories concerning the yeti, UFO sightings, spooklights, sea monsters, the Loch Ness Monster and others. The articles are written by Otto Binder, John Prytz, Armand Laprade, Kenneth Larson, Kurt Glemser, Dennis Stamey, John Hopp, etc. Send cash, cheque or money order to: Kurt Glemser, 489 Krug St., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.



# **NOW... is the RIGHT TIME to SUBSCRIBE TO**

AERIAL RESEARCH SYSTEMS'

## **S E N T I N E L**



For an objective yet exciting look at man's past, present, and future in space. What are the UFOs? Where do they come from? And most important: why are they in our skies? The SENTINEL answers these questions in a new and startling way. To separate science-fact from science-fiction, we have provided a platform for the best writers in the fields of UFOlogy, astronomy, and aerospace research. Profusely illustrated, The SENTINEL is an interstellar odyssey in search of the solutions to the most urgent and exciting event in human history: The coming of the saucers!

A lot of people will be shocked by what they read in this monthly journal. A lot more will see the beginnings of a new hope for our planet from a totally unexpected direction. Don't miss the next 12 exciting issues... subscribe NOW! Only \$4.50 for 1 year (12 issues), or \$8.50 for 2 years (24 issues).

Aerial Research Systems

Post Office Box 715

Banning, Calif. 92220

AERIAL RESEARCH SYSTEMS'

# SENTINEL

# 30

50 Cents

September 1970

## IN THIS ISSUE

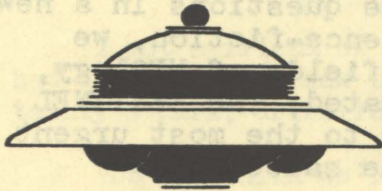
Space Life

U. F. O.s and Sound

Secret Weapons

Dr. Hynek Speaks

Sighting Report



## THE LIVING UNIVERSE

## THE MYSTERIOUS COHOKE LIGHT \*

by Jay Mundy

Even as I dashed across the parking lot and through the doors of the restaurant, just steps ahead of a cold gust of rain, there was doubt forming in my mind.

For a number of years - too many- I have been "poking" around the edge of ghost stories people tell you, without much success, to be convinced that this "mysterious light" on the railroad tracks at Cohoke, Virginia, would turn out to be any different than all the other cases.

In short, I'm a notorious skeptic.

It was the fall of 1969, that I first heard of the light. An insurance salesman, whom I'll call Scotty, had a route that took him throughout the Pamunky Indian Reservation, Cohoke, Sweet Hall, and West Point. Many times he had listened to people tell of seeing the light on the tracks, but had never bothered to stop to watch for it himself. Not until I talked him into going to show me the way.

Our first trip wasn't so much a research trip, as it was "just something to do on a Saturday night."

Along were his wife, a girl friend of theirs, and myself. The night was moonlit, whippoorwills called to each other from the lonely woods alongside the tracks, but no ghostly light.

There was already a gang of people there - young and old, lovers and married folks with kids - waiting for the light to put in an appearance.

We waited until long past midnight. A gang of teenagers showed up, the car radio playing loudly, drinking beer, and making so much noise that the mood was lost. We went home.

Now, nearly five months later, I was going for my second attempt to see the light. The first hadn't impressed me too greatly. I just didn't believe there was a light to be seen.

I met a friend of mine, named Frank, in a Newport News restaurant. Someone had said that you saw the light better on a dark, drizzling night. This was certainly a dark, drizzling night.

"Do you think we'll see it?" I asked.

Frank shrugged. "I don't know. A lot of people say they've seen it. All of them can't be lying."

"Then, let's go," I said. "It's a long drive."

. . . continued

---

\* Reprinted from the New Dominion, a supplement to THE DAILY PRESS, Newport News Hampton, Va., Sunday, August 23, 1970.



From Newport News to West Point is 42 miles. The small, rural town goes to sleep early in the evening and, as we passed through it on our way to Cohoke, only the red light where we were to make a left turn was on hand to greet us. Everything else was closed and dark.

Cohoke, itself, is nothing more than a spot where a dirt road crosses the railroad tracks. Once a house stood there and, a depot building, but now, because visitors in the night burned them both to the ground, there are only charred timbers and cement foundations laying in the weeds. And, standing a mute guard beside the tracks, an old oak tree.

Some people claimed that it was once the "hanging tree." Others tell another tale, of a lynching that took place 60 years ago.

From that day forward, they claim, the mysterious light has appeared.

Still another popular tale claims a railroad conductor fell from the rear of the train, a wheel cut off his head and, since then it is his spirit haunting the tracks, looking for the head with the aid of his lantern.

But there are no facts - or none that I could find - to back up any of the claims.

The railroad was used once to haul passengers from West Point, where Ferry boats docked in those days, to Richmond. But that service stopped in 1933. Only flat cars hauling pulp wood use it any more.

A. T. Dill, Director of Public Relations for the Chesapeake Corporation, a large pulp mill in West Point, and a noted historian of the area, answered a letter I wrote him.

"There was no wreck on the railroad or lynching," it read. "The only hanging tree that I have heard of in this area was the one on what is now Second St., in downtown West Point, that supposedly was used in 1676 or 1677 to hang one of Governor Berkeley's opponents in the Bacon's Rebellion."

J. S. Gunn, retired engineer for the Southern Railway System, now living in Richmond, worked the West Point to Richmond line the last three years before his retirement in 1962.

"I'd heard about a ghost-light," he said, "but I never seen it."

Neither did retired conductor G. C. Waddell, 51 years with the railroad, 10 of them on the Cohoke line.

"Nothing - absolutely nothing," he said, "not even a story about it. Its news to me about a ghost on the tracks."

None of this, however, did Frank and I know when we pulled to a stop opposite the old tree and switched off the car lights.

It had stopped raining and was a foggy, black night, just the proper setting for seeing ghostly lights on lonely railroad tracks.

. . . continued

"Well," he asked. "What now? Want to walk down the tracks?"

"Might as well do it proper," I said, and we went a good three hundred yards down the dark railroad.

In the hours that we waited, we heard things walking in the leaves - birds and small varmints on the prowl - and the rain dripping from the trees, but no light appeared. Twice now, I had seen absolutely nothing.

Weeks passed before I made another trip up there. I was to end up making 15 trips in all. My record for "seeing the light" was just about what I expected, too. Zero.

After the tenth visit I gave it up. I hadn't seen anything to investigate. I met people there constantly and they persisted that a light did appear.

Then it was summer. I had not even thought about the light for a while. On the spur of the moment, three friends and I decided to take one last look. This just might be the night it would appear for us.

And it did. I got the surprise of my life. I saw, with my own eyes, the light on the railroad tracks!

It was a warm summer evening. Stars were bright, but it was pitch black. Lighting bugs were big as nickels. Frogs and bugs were fussing at each other in the weeds like women hanging on a back fence.

There were a good dozen of us gathered there at the time, right across from the crooked old tree. Some of them claimed they had seen the light before; others like myself, had never seen a thing.

I talked to a man who said he saw it three times. We were leaning against the hood of the car. No one was talking loudly. Everyone was rather serious about it.

Then some said quietly, "Look. There it is."

What I saw, at first glimpse, appeared to be the train coming. From where we stood at Cohoke, to the other crossing at Sweet Hall, behind the light, was approximately a mile and a half. Another couple hundred yards below Sweet Hall, the tracks took a sharp turn to the left. The light appeared to be there at the curve. The glow from it lit up the tracks on both sides like a flare sent up by soldiers. It lasted only a few moments. Certainly not long enough to get a real good look at it.

"Is that the light everyone sees," I asked?

"Yes," replied those who had seen it before. "That is the light."

I walked far down the tracks, hoping that it would come closer. It appeared several more times, always just a brief moment before fading away, always far down the tracks. Never close enough for a good look.

. . . continued

And there was nothing frightening about it. Nor, I thought, uncommon. It was just a light. Rather, more like the glow from a light that is about to come around a curve, but doesn't ever get there. Pretty much the way a car light appears before the car itself gets there.

Anyway, I had a look at the strange light on the railroad tracks. I wasn't very impressed. People claim it comes on and stays on for a long time, even moving down the tracks like a "lantern," until it nears someone, then it vanishes.

It never behaved that way when I was there. And afterwards I made several more trips, always trying to get a better look at it. In the back of my mind something was nagging at me. There was something familiar about the light, but, for the moment, I couldn't put my finger on it.

It was days later before I got the chance to visit the spot again. Meanwhile I started digging around for facts. That proved to be quite a chore.

Some told me Duke University had done some research on the light. I wrote Duke a letter. An answer came back from J. B. Rhine, head of Duke's famous Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man.

"I do not recall ever having heard about the appearance of the light on the railroad tracks near West Point," wrote the noted parapsychologist. "But a somewhat similar claim of the appearance of a strange light has been frequently reported in connection with a place in eastern North Carolina."

The place is Maco, N. C., near Wilmington. Both the light there and the one here have much in common. They don't appear at any certain time, they are big and glowing on one occasion, and small, like a wandering, cold, star, at others.

But then reports are expected to differ on such a subject. What I needed now was something to back up these tales. If, for example, it was a ghost of the lynched Negro, or the decapitated railroad conductor, then certainly there must be a report of the incidents somewhere.

If it was something else - something with a logical explanation - then, that too I must locate.

I went around talking to residents. Their reaction was dread. They hoped that I wasn't going to start up trouble again. Sheriff C. T. Dunn, for example has more trouble than anyone else. He has to try to keep things down to a dull roar at times.

The Sheriff has not only been the peace officer in the area for the past 35 years, but has lived all of his 68 years right in Sweet Hall, right alongside the tracks on the very route the "ghost light" is supposed to travel.

"I've hunted the woods," said the soft-speaking law officer, "since I was a boy. I used to walk up and down the tracks while I was courting my wife, and I've never seen anything on them that I couldn't explain."

"Well," I asked, "how long have people been seeing the light?"

"I've been having troubles because of it for about 10 years," he replied.

. . . continued

His troubles are not little ones. Besides the two buildings that were burned down, visitors have also set fire to the old store several times and, only because the Sheriff rose from bed to put it out, has the building been spared. Others have fired guns at the light. And, just recently, two boys drove their car down the tracks. A train started coming. It was forced to stop and the engineers helped the boys set the car off to the side while it passed. Once the train was gone, the boys were mad because the engineers did not help get the car back on the tracks. They piled up a barricade of logs. On the return trip the train nearly ran into it. Both boys were taken in court in Newport News this past June.

The harassment goes on and on and on. I finally asked the Sheriff what he thought the light was.

"They see the reflection of cars going across the tracks, and from where they are standing it does look like a light on the railroad.

"One evening," he recalled, "I drove around to Cohoke to talk to the people. They told me it had just appeared five times in a row. It so happened that I had some people down at my house who came and went about five times. What they saw was the car lights in my driveway."

It sounded logical. That little something nagging me came forward. Once in a lonely canyon in Arizona there was a ghost light. It eventually proved to be reflections of an airport tower search light, seven miles away.

The light I had seen coming around the curve was just like the reflection of car lights. I decided to see if I could recreate a light that looked like it with a car.

An amateur photographer and I, and our girl friends, came early one evening. He and I got out at Cohoke. The girls were to drive back around to Sweet Hall and drive up the dirt road that runs along the tracks, a good three-quarters of the distance between the two points.

I was armed with powerful binoculars; my friend with a movie camera set for photographing in the dark.

It was again a drizzling, black night. Visibility was limited to about 100 yards. He and I walked slowly, hoping all the way that the light would appear, and after about 10 minutes we were almost to the other point.

Then, suddenly, there ahead of us was the light. It was very brief and faint. I threw up the binoculars, but it was too late. The light had already vanished.

We continued to walk. I happened to glance up and there it was again. This time there was no mistake. And I didn't even have to use the binoculars. Even from that distance it was easy to see.

The girls had turned along the road, coming toward us, for they parked and honked the horn.

"Now," I said to my friend, "we know the real source behind the lights people see down here."

But my friend was one of the people who had seen it while it moved along slowly like a small "star!"

"It could be one source of lights," he replied. "But that is not the light I've seen before."

We parked the car on the tracks at that point and spent several more hours watching and waiting. Many times we saw lights, but through the binoculars, they were always cars going over the crossings.

I have not gone back again.

Mr. Dill, I think, summed up the Cohoke "ghost light" rather appropriately in the conclusion of his letter.

"I suspect," he had written, "the Cohoke light comes out of the six - packs that are found so liberally strewn in the area. It doesn't take a parapsychologist's investigation to determine that. I'll be interested to know," he ended it, "if you can find more than I was able to about one of our local attractions which doesn't have to be seen to be believed."

William F. Geeslin, Assistant Vice President of the Southern Railway System in response to a letter from me about the ghost-light, said, "We do not have any information about the strange lights that are reported to appear near Mile Post F-170. It is our feeling, however, that where one finds phenomena plus shenanigans, there are sure to be hooligans."

And the truth of the matter is, I can't.

There just are no facts. In the courthouse, libraries, newspapers, old records - there just isn't a birthplace for the light that I can find.

What remains is just a dark, lonely spot beside the railroad tracks where people come to stand and watch for a strange light, then when a light does appear eventually, they go home convinced, and spread the word to others.

My recommendation is simple: find a more interesting "ghost" to stand around watching. As for myself, the bugs and the possibility of having trouble with a gang of rowdy visitors bent on harassing the area just isn't worth it.

Besides, there is a county ordinance which forbids you from being in the area between sundown and sunrise for the purpose of "watching for the light."

You could get a ticket, and failure to appear in court could result in a fine, and perhaps jail.

The Ordinance adopted by King William County on January 26, 1966, and re-adopted February 23, 1968, prohibits loitering the vicinity of Cohoke, punishable by a fine of \$300 or confinement in jail for thirty days, or both.

END